



**Mississippi Emergency
Management Agency**



Joint Information Center
Joint Field Office
Jackson, Mississippi

FEMA

Recovery News

October 31, 2005
DR-1604-MS-102

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BAY ST. LOUIS – WAVELAND SCHOOL DISTRICT RECEIVES PORTABLE CLASSROOM UNITS, SCHOOL SET TO BEGIN NOVEMBER 7

JACKSON, Miss. – On November 7, 2005, students in the Bay St. Louis – Waveland School District will be heading back to school and studying in a slightly different atmosphere than they were once used to.

The students - in grades K-12, will occupy the more than 60 portable classroom units provided and delivered recently to the State of Mississippi and Hancock County, through a request made to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

“FEMA is committed to helping provide a clean, safe learning environment so students in the impacted areas of the state can move forward with their educational experience,” said Nick Russo, FEMA’s federal coordinating officer in Mississippi. “We will continue to work with local and state officials and our federal partners to ensure local communities have the facilities needed to help instruct Mississippi’s future leaders.”

The District’s 5 schools were either heavily damaged or completely destroyed when Hurricane Katrina made landfall as a Category 3 storm near the Mississippi / Louisiana border on August 29, 2005.

“We have received 50 of the 66 portable units that were requested,” Superintendent Kim Stasny says. “We are so fortunate, and planning right now for more than 60 percent of the pre-Katrina student population to return the first day of classes. We are really looking forward to their arrival.”

That means more than 1,400 students are expected back at the locations of North Bay Elementary, Second Street Elementary, Waveland Elementary, Bay Waveland Middle School and Bay High School, where the portable units have been placed.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has been overseeing the site preparation for and installation of basic services in the portable units, which will accommodate up to 30 students each once fully completed.

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“This plain, modular classroom means everything to students who have lost all touch with stability and normalcy,” said Michael Logue, Chief of Public Affairs, Vicksburg District, USACE. “If you have seen the daily coverage of kids going back to school, playing band with cardboard boxes and sticks, yet totally excited to be back in class, with high attendance ... it is all because their world is starting to look right again. That is what we are delivering, stability for these young people and their community.”

The staff and teachers are also looking forward to returning to the classroom.

“I’ve asked our 200 staff members and teachers to return to work on November 1, so they may begin planning efforts and organize their classrooms for the first day of school in our new space.” Stasny explained. “Furniture has also been ordered for our classrooms and offices, and it will be delivered the same week. Needless to say, we are all excited to be back.”

http://www.photolibrary.fema.gov/photolibrary/photo_details.do?id=17626

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FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.